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Let's talk about real estate: 8 simple conversation-starters

Know your business, and business will come

BY [DOROTHY SCHRAGER](#)

Whether you're a rookie agent, a rising team leader or an established veteran broker, we can all benefit from sharpening our skills. Follow our "[Back to Basics](#)" series to learn fundamental strategies, tactics, philosophies and more from real estate pros across the industry.

Although it might seem awkward at times, starting a real estate conversation is easier than you might realize. If you're out and about doing your daily routine, you probably have more chances than you realize. After recognizing those day-to-day opportunities, getting really good at chatting it up just takes a little practice.

If you're intimidated at the prospect of walking up to complete strangers and talking about your job, try one of these natural [conversation-starters](#) to get the ball rolling.

1. Walk and talk

One of the first things I do in the morning, and at least three times a day, is to walk the dog. I always meet a number of people during these walks; people from the neighborhood that I've gotten to know or other dog walkers.

It's always easy to strike up a conversation with them and with the local store owners who see me passing by. As a [real estate agent](#), I am familiar with just about every building in the area, and I find that discussing the local properties with people I meet along my walk can be a conversation-starter.

Everyone is always curious to know [how the market is doing](#). I must get that question at least twice a day. You can also discuss new buildings coming up in the area or around the corner.

Example opener: "Did you hear that the store around the corner is going to be closing because a developer just bought the property?"

2. Drink coffee, and discuss the market

I find that it's easy to strike up a conversation about the real estate market at the local coffee shop, especially when sitting at the counter. People are getting fueled up for the day, and they're often chatty.

Example opener: "This is such a good neighborhood spot, and I'm just hoping that it can stick around, especially given the price of rents around this area."

3. Chat up your neighbors

If you're like me, you probably run into several people from your building or neighborhood every day, and you likely say a few words to each other.

If people know you're in the business, they will generally ask you how the market is doing. I always have some facts at hand so I can talk about what's new on the market and ask if they know about the apartment that just sold in the building, for example.

I also tell them about properties that recently sold, or are for sale in the surrounding area, around the corner or in the new building just up the block.

One thing leads to another, and suddenly we're talking about prices around the city, what neighborhoods have the best "deals" and how the real estate market is doing in general. Having your [facts at hand](#) is so important.

Example opener: "Did you hear that the Smiths just put their apartment on the market?"

4. Make friends at the gym

The gym is another good place to strike up a conversation about real estate. There are likely people you have been working out with for some time, which lends to a certain familiarity and similar interests.

That common ground makes it easier to start a conversation, and once you mention you're in real estate, you've piqued their interest.

Find out if they live close by or if they have just moved into the neighborhood, and then you can tell them about all the wonderful places to shop and eat in the area.

Example opener: "I've been coming here for years, and I haven't seen you before. Did you just move into the area?"

5. Start a conversation at dinner

If I am going to a dinner party at a friend's home, I make sure I know the apartment layouts, what's for sale in the building and what has just sold.

Have the numbers. Do your homework before you go. People love this sort of information, and again, the real estate conversation will take off from there.

Example opener: "I love this building. Apartments seem to sell rather quickly."

6. Working holiday

When I'm on vacation, the first thing that comes up when meeting new people is where they are from. What are the prices like to rent or buy in their hometown compared to prices in New York (or wherever you live and work)? It's a fun topic and one that everyone seems to like to engage in.

Example opener: "I'm a broker in New York, and I was wondering, what are prices like where you live?"

7. People like celebrity gossip

New York is swimming with celebrities in the entertainment world and high-profile people in business and technology. Everyone loves to hear about them.

Where do they live, how much did they purchase their apartments for, and where did they live previously? These are good facts to know and excellent conversation-starters anywhere you are.

Example opener: Did you hear that Paul McCartney just bought an apartment down the block?

8. Urban architecture

Because I'm lucky enough to live in New York, I always get to talk about the architecture in New York, the gargoyles on some of the older buildings, the gilding, and the fabulous cornices and rooftops.

It's a fascinating subject matter to discuss when you're surrounded by a variety of architectural styles. This also applies to any other major U.S. cities.

Example opener: "It never ceases to amaze me how beautiful some of the buildings are, especially when you look up and see the details."

People everywhere want to know what's going on in the market. Maybe they just bought or sold a property, and they want to justify their price.

The possibilities are endless, because almost everyone needs a place to live, or is investing or trading in real-estate. It's an inextricable part of our lives. In sum, real estate is a hot topic, and there's always something new and interesting to talk about.

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